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THE NEW YORK

# LATIN LEAFLET

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## TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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## Coin Collections in High Schools

The question has been discussed as to the extent to which archæological and historical matters may properly be introduced into the teaching of elementary Latin. I agree with those who maintain that the student's attention should be diverted from simple grammar and syntax as little as possible, during the earlier part of his Latin study, by matters of Roman life and literature. And yet this principle may be, and often is, carried too far. In the boy's or girl's first introductions to Latin grammar, the rule is an excellent one: drill them in grammar, and leave all else aside until they have mastered enough of the language. But when this is accomplished, and they are advanced to reading the classic texts, the rule may most profitably be relaxed; indeed, it must be if an intelligent understanding of the author is desired. Historical, geographical, archæological questions arise continually, and the eager, intelligent scholar demands their explanation; while it depends wholly on the teacher whether the interest of the indifferent boy or girl may be aroused. Here is the instructor's opportunity.

I should like to present to readers of THE LATIN LEAFLET some observations on the usefulness of having in the class-room a few simple *genuine* objects of antiquity to serve in stimulating the student's interest, and bringing him to a better realization of the fact that the authors that he is studying and the people of whom they wrote once really *lived*, and lived, moreover, in a workaday world that differed from our own only in degree. Among the numerous antique "specimens" that can easily be acquired by schools and teachers at a very small outlay, none will serve this purpose better than ancient coins, for the double reason that they bring us almost literally in touch with the ancient people through whose hands they circulated for daily expenditures, and that they bear the names of persons familiar in history, whose life and times are illustrated

by the 'type' or device of the coins; for ancient coins are wholly medalllic, or commemorative, in character, and not, like modern money, inartistic and uninteresting.

The renaissance commentators on the classical texts recognized well the value of coins as an aid to classical study, and old editions are filled with cuts of coins. Later the text-critic superseded the archæologist as an editor, and coins disappeared largely, even from illustrated editions. "*Nunc tandem redit animus*"; the pendulum has swung back again, and modern school and college texts, as well as popular histories (such as *Duruy*) make ample and most profitable, (though too often inexact), use of coins in illustration.

Few, even among classical teachers, have any idea of the vast number of ancient coins that have been, and are still being, discovered by systematic excavation or by accident. I hardly think I exaggerate in asserting that the average yearly "output" of the countries to which the classic culture spread, from India to Britain, is not less than 25000 specimens. Of course a large part of these is so worn by circulation or by time as to be of little or no value; but a goodly proportion is well preserved, though it is a well attested fact that ancient coins very often remained in circulation for a hundred years or more; and the result is that interesting specimens, in good preservation can easily be obtained, except in the case of rare issues, for hardly more than double their intrinsic value as gold, silver, or bronze. There is no reason why every classical teacher should not have a few specimens to show his class; and where the school offers no funds for their purchase, he can secure them for himself at an expense of fifty cents or a dollar each, or even less. If the class is reading Cæsar, or Cicero, Vergil, or Livy, vivid interest can readily be aroused by placing in their hands specimens of the actual money in use in their days, or in the earlier days of which they wrote, the types of which illustrate and vitalize in myriad ways the facts, customs or legends around which their thought centered.

Let me illustrate my point with a few examples taken at random from many hundreds. I

omit speaking of Greek coins, (beautiful and interesting as they are), and of Gallic coins of the Sequani, Ædui, Lingones, and other tribes made so familiar by Cæsar's *Commentaries*; on which we find even the names of Orgetorix and Dumnorix in Latin and Greek letters; but confine myself to Roman coins proper, and to those that are easily to be had at a low price. I do not speak here of coins as representing the currency of a famous epoch only; though a class reading the story of the Punic wars, that with Pyrrhus, or the Social War; of the Decemvirs, the Gracchi, the triumvirates, the Emperors, would feel a certain thrill which would quicken their interest in the text, if the teacher should, at the proper moment and with a few remarks tending to stir their imagination, let them hold and examine specimens of the actual money that was passed from hand to hand by those old Romans. I cite examples only in reference to the *face* of the coin and what it illustrates.

Suppose that the class is reading about Romulus and Numa and their times. There are silver coins (*denarii*), struck about 90 B C, by L Titurius Sabinus (whose son, by the way, was Q' Titurius Sabinus, one of Cæsar's *legati* who is so frequently mentioned in the *Commentaries*.) Titurius, as a chief of the Roman mint, selected for his coins types that were practically a pun upon his name, *Sabinus*; he chose the stories of the Sabines in Rome. One silver *denarius* shows the head of old Titus Tatius, the Sabine King, labeled TA, and represents the Rape of the Sabines by two *iuvenes Romani* in the act of carrying off two girls; another, with the same head, shows the Sabine warriors piling their shields on the unfortunate Tarpeia. When Romulus "*e conspectu ablatu est*", he became the god Quirinus, and his head as such, properly labeled QUIRINUS, appears on silver coins of C. Memmius (about 60 B C), son of the Memmius to whom Lucretius dedicated his immortal *de Rerum Natura*—(of whom also there is an interesting *denarius*)—and of Sulla's daughter Fausta. Coins struck by Sulla himself, or his lieutenants in his name, are quite common; but Marius' name never appears on coins, nor do those of the Gracchi.

Heads of Numa and Ancus Marcius are shown on coins of Marcius Censorinus (about 85 B C), a partisan of Marius, proscribed by Sulla. There is a very interesting *denarius*, struck about 54 B C by Paullus Æmilius Lepidus, whose ancestor Æmilius Paullus overcame Perseus, the last King of Macedon,

and reduced his country to a Roman province. It shows Æmilius standing beside a trophy of arms, looking haughtily down upon Perseus and his two sons, who, with hands bound behind their backs, are waiting to be led miserably in his triumph. Coins of Pompeius are scarce, of Cæsar very common. Among the more interesting of the latter are those celebrating his victory over Vercingetorix. Brutus' coins are most suggestive. He held up as his models his "ancestor" Brutus, who helped to expel the hated Tarquins, and Servilius Ahala, who killed with his own hand Spurius Mælius, as Cicero notes in the first *Catilinarian*, and hence placed their heads on his silver coins in apology of his murder of Cæsar. Cicero never had charge of the coinage, but there are thousands of coins of his *Tulliola's* husband, Piso. Antonius' coins, too, are very numerous, especially those struck with names of legions for the payment of his troops before the battle of Actium, and—curiously enough—a large part of them are filled with lead! With Antonius' death the Empire practically begins, and the historical events are chronicled almost year by year on the coins of Augustus and his successors.

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## Constitution of the New York Latin Club

### ARTICLE I Name and Objects

1 This Society shall be known as THE NEW YORK LATIN CLUB.

2 Its objects shall be to encourage discussions, formal and informal, on any matters pertaining to classical study; to promote the interests of classical instruction; to establish one or more High School College Entrance Scholarships; and to publish a periodical devoted to the promotion of these objects.

### ARTICLE II Officers

1 The officers shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and a Censor, who shall hold office for one year and be charged with the duties usually appertaining to such officers.

2 These officers shall constitute an Executive Committee, who shall be responsible for the direction of the affairs of the Club, the disposition of the funds, the awarding of the Scholarships, etc.

3 The election of officers shall occur at the May meeting of each year. The President shall appoint a nominating committee, who shall in turn appoint the officers for the ensuing year, subject to the approval of the Club.

### ARTICLE III Meetings

1 There shall be three meetings of the Club each year, the Annual Meeting in May and two others. These meetings shall be called by the President. Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee.

2 Each meeting of the Club shall be characterized by at least one discussion, paper or other evidence of